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BY GEORGE HOWARD,

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DOMESTIC.

[We copy from the Washington Globe of the 6th inst. the following interesting letter from the President of the United States, in reply to the committee of the Republican members of the New York Legislature, relating to the recent rejection of Mr. Van Buren.]

Washington, Feb. 23, 1832.

Gentlemen: I have had the honor to receive your letter of the 9th inst. inclosing the resolutions passed "at a meeting of the republican members of the State of New York," on the rejection by the Senate of the United States of the nomination of Martin Van Buren, as Minister to England.

I am profoundly grateful for the approbation which that distinguished body of my republican fellow citizens of New York have, on that occasion, been pleased to express of the passed administration of the affairs placed in my charge by the people of the United States, and for their generous offers of continued confidence and support. Conscious of the rectitude of my intentions, my reliance in all the vicissitudes of my public life has been upon the virtue and patriotism of an enlightened people. Their generous support has been my shield and my stay, when, in times past: the zealous performances of the arduous military duties allotted to me, though crowned with success, was sought to be made a ground of reproach; and this manifestation on the part of my fellow citizens of the great State of New York, assures me that services not less faithful in the civil administration will not be less successfully defended.

When such reliance fails the public servant, public liberty will be in danger; for if the people become insensible to indignities offered to those, who, with pure intentions, devote themselves to the advancement of the safety and happiness of the country, public virtue will cease to be respected, and public trusts will be sought for other rewards than those of patriotism.

I cannot withhold my entire concurrence with the republican members of the Legislature in their high estimation of their eminent fellow citizen, whom they have so generously come forward to sustain. To this I will add the assurance of my undiminished respect for his great public and private worth, and my full confidence in the integrity of his character.

In calling him to the Department of State from the exalted station he then occupied by the suffrages of the people of his native State, I was not influen-

ced more by his acknowledged talents and public services, than by the general wish and expectation of the Republican Party throughout the Union. The signal ability and success which distinguished his administration of the duties of that Department, have fully justified the selection.

I owe it to the late Secretary of State, myself, and to the American people, on this occasion to state, that as far as is known to me, he had no participation whatever in the occurrences relative to myself and the second officer of the government, or in the dissolution of the late Cabinet; and that there is no ground for imputing to him the having advised those removals from office which, in the discharge of my constitutional functions, it was deemed proper to make. During his continuance in the Cabinet, his exertions were directed to produce harmony among its members; and he uniformly endeavored to sustain his colleagues. His final resignation was a sacrifice of official station to what he deemed the best interests of the country.

Mr. McLane, our then minister at London, having previously asked permission to return, it was my own anxious desire to commit the important points remaining open in our relations with Great Britain, to a successor in whose peculiar fitness and capacity I had equal confidence; and to my selection, Mr. Van Buren yielded a reluctant assent. In urging upon him that sacrifice, I did not doubt that I was doing the best for the country, and acting in coincidence with the public wish; and it certainly could not have been anticipated that, in the manner of successfully conducting and terminating an important and complex negotiation, which had previously received the sanction of both Houses of Congress, there would have been found motives for embarrassing the Executive action and for interrupting an important foreign negotiation.

I can never be led to doubt that, in the instructions under which that negotiation relative to the trade with the British West Indies was conducted and successfully concluded, the people of the United States will find nothing either derogatory to the national dignity and honor, or improper for such an occasion.

Those parts of the instructions which have been used to justify the rejection of Mr. Van Buren's nomination by the Senate of the United States, proceeded from my own suggestion: were the result of my own deliberate investigation and reflection; and now, as when they were dictated, appear to me to be entirely proper and consonant to my public duty.

I feel, gentlemen, that I am incapable of tarnishing the pride or dignity of that country, whose glory, both in the field and in the civil administration, it has been my object to elevate: and I feel assured that the exalted attitude which the American people maintain abroad, and the prosperity with which they are blessed at home, fully attest

that their honor and happiness have been unsullied in my hands.

A participation in the trade with the British West India Islands, upon terms mutually satisfactory to the United States and Great Britain, had been an object of constant solicitude with our government from its origin. During the long and vexatious history of this subject, various propositions had been made with but partial success; and in the administration of my immediate predecessor, more than one attempt to adjust it had ended in a total interruption of the trade.

The acknowledged importance of this branch of trade, the influence it was believed to have had in the elections which terminated in the change of the administration, and the general expectation on the part of the people, that renewed efforts, on frank and decisive grounds, might be successfully made to recover it, imposed upon me the duty of undertaking the task.

Recently, however, Great Britain had more than once declined renewing the negotiation, and placed her refusal upon objections which she thought proper to take to the manner of our previous negotiation, and to claims which had at various times been made upon the part of our government.

The American Government, notwithstanding, continued its efforts to obtain a participation in the trade. It waived the claims at first insisted upon, as well as the objection to the imposition by Great Britain of higher duties upon the produce of the United States, when imported into the West Indies, than upon the produce of her own possessions, which objection had been taken in 1819 in a dispatch of the then Secretary of State.

A participation in the trade with the British West India Islands could not have been, at any time, demanded as a right; any more than in that to the British European ports. In the posture of affairs already adverted to, therefore, the Executive could ask nothing more than to be permitted to engage in it upon the terms assented to by his predecessor, and which were the same as those previously offered by Great Britain herself. Even these had been denied to the late administration, and for reasons arising from the views entertained by the British Government of our conduct in the past negotiations.

It was foreseen that this refusal might be repeated, and on the same grounds. When it became the duty of the Executive, rather than disappoint the expectations of the people, and wholly abandon the trade, to continue the application, it was proper to meet the objection to the past acts of the American administration, which objection, as had been foreseen, was actually made, and for some time insisted upon.

It is undoubtedly the duty of all to sustain, by an undivided and patriotic front, the action of the constituted authorities towards foreign nations; and this duty requires, that during the continuance of an administration in office, nothing should be

done to embarrass the Executive intercourse in its foreign policy, unless upon a conviction that it is erroneous. A thorough change in the administration, however, raises up other authorities of equal dignity, and equally entitled to respect; and an open adoption of a different course implies no separation of the different parts of the government; nor does an admission of the inexpediency or impracticability of previous demands imply any want of respect for those who may have maintained them.

To defend the claims or pretensions, as they had been indiscriminately called, on either side, in the previous correspondence, which had been for a time urged by the late administration, would have been to defend what that administration, by waiving them, had admitted to be untenable; and if that which had been by them conceded to be inexpedient, could not be sustained as proper, I perceive nothing derogatory, and surely nothing wrong, in conducting the negotiation upon the common and established principle, that in a change of administration there may be a corresponding change in the policy and counsels of the government. This principle exists, and is acted upon, in the diplomatic and public transactions of all nations. The fact of its existence in the recent change of the administration of the American government, was as notorious as the circulation of the American press could make it; and while its influence upon the policy of foreign nations was both natural and reasonable, it was proper, according to my sense of duty, frankly to avow it, if the interests of the people of the United States should so require.

Such was the motive, and such and nothing more, is the true import of the instructions taken as a whole, which I directed to be given to our minister at London, and which neither expressed nor implied condemnation of the government of the United States, nor of the late administration, further than had been implied by their own acts and admissions.

I could not reconcile it to my sense of public duty; or of national dignity, that the United States should suffer continued injury or injustice, because, a former administration had insisted upon terms which it had subsequently waived, or had failed seasonably to accept an offer which it had afterwards been willing to embrace. The conduct of previous administrations was not to be discussed either for censure or defence; and only in case "the omission of this government to accept of the terms proposed when heretofore offered," should "be urged as an objection now," it was made the duty of the minister "to make the British government sensible of the injustice and inexpediency of such a course."

Both the right and the propriety of setting up the past acts of previous administrations to justify the exclusion of the United States from a trade allowed to all other nations, was distinct-

ly denied; and the instructions authorized the minister to state that such a course towards the United States "under existing circumstances, would be unjust in itself, and could not fail to excite the deepest sensibility—the tone of feeling which a course so unwise and untenable is calculated to produce, would doubtless be greatly aggravated by the consciousness that Great Britain has, by orders in council, opened her colonial ports to Russia and France, notwithstanding a similar omission on their part to accept the terms offered by the act of the 5th July, 1825;"—he was told that "he could not press this view of the subject too earnestly upon the consideration of the British ministry;" and the prejudicial influence of a course on the part of the British government so unwise and unjust upon the future relations of the two countries, was clearly announced in the declaration that "it has bearings and relations that reach beyond the immediate question under discussion."

If the British government should decline an arrangement "on the ground of a change of opinion, or in order to promote her own interests," a prompt avowal of that purpose was demanded; but if they should not be prepared to take that ground, "but suffer themselves to desire that the United States should, in expiation of supposed past encroachments, be driven to the necessity of retracing their legislative steps without knowledge of its effect, and wholly dependent upon the indulgence of Great Britain," they were to be made sensible of the impracticability of that course, and to be taught to expect such measures on our part as would vindicate our national interest and honor. To announce distinctly to Great Britain that we would not submit to a continued injustice, on the ground of any objection to the past conduct of the American government, whether it were right or wrong; was the obvious import of the whole instructions.

If the Executive had caused it to be stated to Great Britain, that finding his predecessors to have been in error, as was implied by subsequently waiving the terms they had advocated, and had, in expiation of those errors, abandoned the trade to the pleasure of the British government, the interests of the United States would have suffered, and their honor been reproached; but in excluding such considerations, as inappropriate and unjust, and in clearly avowing his purpose not to submit to such treatment, he hoped to promote the interests of his fellow citizens, and sustain the honor & dignity of his country.

In all this, gentlemen, I have the approbation of my judgment and conscience. Acting upon the principle, early announced, of asking nothing but what is right, and submitting to nothing that is wrong, I ask that only of which the justice could not be denied. I ask a participation in the trade, upon terms just to the United States, and mutually advantageous to both countries. I directed a simple (continued on the last page.)